



For Immediate Release

Contact: Craig Orfield  
(202) 224-6770

Friday, September 29, 2006

***SENATE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES BILL TO PROTECT, SERVE  
NATION'S SENIOR CITIZENS***

**Washington, D.C.** - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today applauded unanimous Senate passage of the "Older Americans Act," H.R. 6197, a bill to reauthorize programs that will enrich the lives and well being of older Americans through a range of social service programs, including home-delivered nutrition, community service employment, long-term care coordination and elder abuse and neglect prevention.

"This bill will help ensure that our nation's older Americans, including 78.2 million aging Baby Boomers, are healthy, fed, housed, able to get where they need to go and safe from abuse and scams," Enzi said. "Millions of older individuals rely daily on Older Americans Act programs, and I am very pleased that we have been to reauthorize and improve upon those programs in a bipartisan, bicameral manner."

The House of Representatives passed the bill on Thursday, and it will now be sent to the President to sign into law.

The legislation, which was first enacted in 1965, supports and protects seniors through a range of social service programs, including home-delivered nutrition, community service employment, long-term care coordination and elder abuse and neglect prevention.

"The number one resolution of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging called upon Congress to reauthorize the Older Americans Act during the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. The Senate and the House have accomplished that goal on behalf of one of our nation's greatest resources – older Americans."

The reauthorization bill is cosponsored by the Committee's Ranking Member, Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Retirement Security and Aging, Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH), and the Subcommittee's Ranking Member, Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD). In the House, the bill is cosponsored by Representative Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-CA), Chairman of the House Committee on

Education and the Workforce, Representative George Miller (D-CA), Ranking Member of the Committee, Representative Patrick Tiberi (R-OH), and Representative Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX).

“I would like to thank Representative McKeon, Representative Miller, Representative Tiberi, and Representative Hinojosa for guiding this bill through the House of Representatives, and I am deeply grateful to Senator Kennedy, Senator DeWine, and Senator Mikulski for their continued leadership and support for this critical legislation.”

***Key provisions of the “Older Americans Act” Reauthorization will:***

- Direct the Department of Health and Human Services’ Assistant Secretary of Aging to appoint a full time officer to take charge of federal elder abuse and prevention services and to coordinate federal elder justice activities;
- Promote the development of systems that enable older individuals to receive long-term care in home and community-based settings based on individual needs and preferences;
- Improve access to programs and services under the Act by addressing the needs of older individuals with limited English proficiency;
- Encourage both States and area agencies on aging to plan for population changes and require state agencies and local area agencies on aging to coordinate activities and develop long-range emergency preparedness plans;
- Improve access to supportive services that help foster independence and maintain quality of life, including assistive technology services and devices, mental health services, and activities to promote life-long learning;
- Expand Caregiver program services to older adults caring for children of any age with a disability; individuals with Alzheimer’s disease; and grandparents or relative caregivers, age 55 and older, caring for children of any age; and,
- Ensure that the Older American Community Service Employment Program, a job-training program for older Americans, provides on the job training to unemployed seniors in community service programs – helping seniors build new jobs skills while providing skilled workers for programs serving low-income families and individuals.

#####